



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Heather Bond Somers and Harry A. Watson

Saturday, March 1, 2014

8:30 AM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Schmidt called the meeting to order at 8:37 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor de la Cruz, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Somers and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Councilor Cerf

Also present was Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. NEW BUSINESS

2013-0286

Town Council Goals

Referred

Mayor Schmidt distributed an overview of the four goal areas identified at the last meeting and information received from Councilors by staff to date.

1. Economic Development (Somers/de la Cruz)

Councilor Somers and de la Cruz agreed that goals should be attainable in the two-year term of the Council. With the Director of Planning and Development retiring, there is an opportunity to fill the position with a Director/Economic Development Specialist, reporting directly to the Town Manager. Councilors Somers and de la Cruz feel the Council should support the plan developed by the School Facilities Initiative Task Force. Fitch Middle School represents an opportunity to create a downtown presence with a Town green atmosphere. Councilor de la Cruz suggested that the Town must do a better job at communicating the need and the message.

Significant discussion followed on the lack of power and direction for the Economic Development Commission; the possibility of establishing a smaller group; previous goals associated with economic development; working collaboratively with the Commission to develop a plan for economic development; and the joint task force on establishing an economic development corporation.

The following goals were ultimately identified:

- Evaluate and restructure goals and direction of the current Economic Development Commission to create a highly efficient, functioning Economic Development Commission.*
- Increase revenue (grow the grand list).*
- Implement quarterly meetings with the Economic Development Commission.*

2. Charter Revision (Frink/Flax)

Councilor Frink explained that the purpose of revising the charter is to facilitate other initiatives. He reviewed his previously-distributed suggestions for changes to the charter and discussion

followed on the specific topics including the hiring process; special taxing districts and financial ramifications; creating of a Board of Finance and/or budget referendum; and employee retirement programs and benefits.

The following goal was ultimately identified:

- Establish a Charter Revision Commission with a focus on Chapters 5 and 9 to create a more efficient Town.

3. Improved/Increased Communication (Cerf/Watson)

Discussion followed on increasing content on the Town's Facebook page; using the Town Council/RTM/ Board of Education Liaison Committee to a greater extent; and establishing a Community Relations standing committee. Councilor Flax suggested that Councilors be more cognizant of who is talking to who when approached by members of the public so that the Town Manager's time is not being wasted. Councilors also discussed using GMTV to educate the public and collaborating with the subdivisions and Board of Education on technology.

The following goals were ultimately identified:

- Create a Town-wide Facebook page that all Town departments contribute to.*
- Increase Councilor presence in the community.*
- Evaluate efficiencies of Town-wide technology and analyze merging our systems to achieve savings in purchasing and maintenance with the possibility of outsourcing.*

The consensus of the Council was to add a Community Relations standing committee to the draft Town Council Rules.

4. Co-location of Departments (Moravsik/Peruzzotti)

Councilor Moravsik distributed a conceptual plan on centralization of Town departments and the Board of Education, which he developed. Discussion followed on the need to support such a proposal in the community.

The following goal was identified:

- Develop a viable strategic plan to build a Town of Groton Core Community Complex utilizing the current Town Hall and Fitch Middle School, to be bonded by a referendum.*

Staff will distribute draft goals to the Council for review and comment prior to the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

4. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Somers, to adjourn the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

The motion carried unanimously.